

Utah! Fall Color Tours

Utah in the Fall is a blast of color! From golden cottonwoods along meandering streams to the supernatural glow of aspen and oak in mountains and meadows, Utah's fall colors will take your breath away.

These 31 tours will take you to state and national parks, national forests, high plateaus and redrock canyons. Whether you follow the prescribed routes or head out on your own, our season of splendor will surely lure you down many roads.

Utah's fall color season gets underway in early September at higher, northern mountain locations and continues into November in lower, southern locales.

For an up-to-the minute report on where the colors are, click on the [Current Color Update](#).

Due to weather and low water this year, colors may change sooner and may not last as long as normal. But if you chart your route carefully and call ahead, you should be well-rewarded.

Wherever you go, you're not far from comfy digs, cozy dining, superb camping and all the recreation a body can handle. Once you've considered your routes, start your tour at www.utah.com to select lodging or campsites. You can also visit ["Utah's Best Destinations"](#) to obtain telephone numbers for Utah's various regional information centers.



Cedar Breaks NM, Tom Till

All-American Road

The All-American Road designation is the highest honor bestowed by the Federal Highway Administration. It signifies that Highway 12 has exceptional scenic and historic qualities and is a destination unto itself.

- **Utah Highway 12 All American Road** [Highway 12-A Journey Through Time Scenic Byway](#)

National Scenic Byways

Earlier this year, the Federal Highway Administration added 23 new National Scenic Byways and 13 All-American Roads to the roster of America's Byways. Utah has earned two new National Scenic Byways.

America's Byways. Utah has earned two new National Scenic Byway designations:

- **Dinosaur Diamond** Scenic Byway [Dinosaur Diamond Prehistoric Highway](#)
- **Logan Canyon** Scenic Byway [Logan Canyon Scenic Byway](#)

The new roads complement three previously-named Utah routes:

- [Energy Loop: Huntington and Eccles Canyons Scenic Byways](#)
- [Flaming Gorge-Uintas Scenic Byway](#)
- [Nebo Loop Scenic Byway](#)

For additional information on Utah Scenic Byways, go to www.byways.org. The site contains extensive profiles on every Scenic Byway and All-American Road in the U.S. Each site includes excellent maps.




Many of the drives noted in this guide also appear in the Utah Travel Council's lush [Scenic Byways and Backways](#) guidebook.

Navigating this Guide

Numerous websites appear throughout this guide to help you plan your fall tours.

If you are not an experienced off-road driver or lack appropriate equipment, do not attempt routes marked with the 4WD symbol.

Never travel unprepared in the backcountry

UT	Utah Highway Number
US	U.S. Highway Number
	route unsuitable for large rv's, motorhomes & trailers
	high-clearance/4WD recommended
	snow could render route impassable

The Tours

Updated October 24, 2002

As of October 24, fall colors are faded and leaves have fallen in Utah, with only isolated pockets of low elevation vegetation displaying fall color vibrancy.

1 Brigham City - Logan - Bear Lake

Follow US 89-91 from Brigham City north to Logan via Sardine Canyon (25 miles). Continue northeast from Logan on US 89 to Bear Lake through Logan Canyon (now a National Scenic Byway) and the Wasatch-Cache National Forest (40 miles).

www.tourcachevalley.com

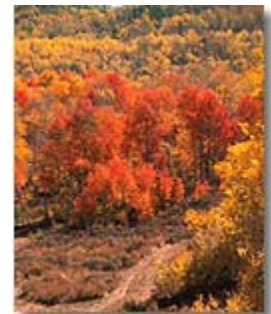


Logan Canyon, Frank Jensen

2 Ogden Canyon - Huntsville - Woodruff

Follow UT 39 (Ogden Canyon) east from Ogden into the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. At Huntsville and the Pineview Reservoir, turn north to return to Ogden via the county road (Route 166) that goes through Eden, (Route 162) from Eden to Liberty and on to North Ogden. Option: continue east on UT 39 to Woodruff; return to Ogden on I-80 and I-84.

www.ogdencvb.org



Monte Cristo Area, Frank Jensen

3 Ogden - Salt Lake City - Weber Canyon - East Canyon -

Emigration Canyon - Parley's Canyon

Follow I-84 southeast from Ogden to the Morgan exit. Take UT 66 south to East Canyon State Park and UT 65. Continue south on UT 65 along Pioneer Memorial Highway to I-80. Take I-80 west to Salt Lake City. Option: take Emigration Canyon from UT 65 to Salt Lake City (turn west about 16



Parley's Canyon, Mel Lewis

miles south of East Canyon Reservoir). www.ogdencvb.com, www.visitsaltlake.com, www.parkcityinfo.com

4 Bountiful Peak Drive



This route connects Bountiful and Farmington on unpaved roads in the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. Access via US 89 in either Bountiful or Farmington.

Mueller Canyon Drive


Driving east toward the Wasatch Mountains in Bountiful, take 1800 South toward Mueller Canyon. Although this close-in tour starts in a residential area, it opens into one of the most vibrant and colorful fall color areas in suburban Utah. **Open to passenger cars.** (801) 451-3286

5 Tooele Area Drives - Middle Canyon - South Willow Road

Take Vine Street from Main Street and head east until Vine becomes **Middle Canyon Road**. You are now driving into the Oquirrh Mountains. At the summit, return by the same route or continue east into the Salt Lake Valley through Butterfield Canyon. This route also provides access to the Bingham Canyon Copper Mine overlook.



Middle Canyon Drive

 The majority of the road on the west side of Butterfield pass is paved. On the eastern side, the road is dirt and washboarded. This route is generally steep and portions have narrow switchbacks. A four-wheel drive or high clearance vehicle is recommended.

The **South Willow Road** originates six miles south of Grantsville and winds west through the Wasatch-Cache National Forest for about eight miles to the Deseret Peak trailhead. The first half of this backway is paved, the second half is not. Although the road is rough and steep, it is passable in a passenger car in good weather. Ask locally about road conditions and weather before attempting this route

6 Parley's Canyon - Emigration Canyon

This is a Salt Lake area version of tour #3—a 25-mile loop tour along I-80 and Emigration Canyon. Near the entrance to Emigration Canyon, you'll pass by two landmarks—Hogle Zoo and This Is The Place Heritage Park. Close by: Fort Douglas (site of Olympic Village during the 2002 Olympic Winter Games) and the University of Utah. Option: follow I-80 east to Park City, one of Utah's primary Olympic and destination resort towns. www.visitsaltlake.com, www.parkcityinfo.com



Parley's Canyon, Mid Lewis

7 Big Cottonwood Canyon - Solitude - Brighton

In Salt Lake City, get off I-215 at Exit 6 and follow UT 190 south to the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon. Turn left here. UT 190 continues up this canyon. As you head up-canyon, you enter the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. Toward the top of the canyon, you'll pass Solitude Mountain Resort (www.skisolitude.com) enroute to the village of Brighton and Brighton Resort (www.skibrighton.com)



8 Big Cottonwood Canyon - Guardsman's Pass - Park City - Heber

Valley  

Same directions to Big Cottonwood Canyon (preceding tour). Just below the village of Brighton, take the Guardsman's Pass road over the mountain to either Park City or Heber.

Route passable in passenger car in good weather and more driver friendly today than it was decades ago.

www.parkcityinfo.com, www.hebervalleycc.org



9 Little Cottonwood Canyon

Get off I-215 south at Exit 6, then proceed south on UT 190. Continue straight through the Big Cottonwood Canyon intersection. The route becomes UT 210. Follow this road, which becomes Little Cottonwood Canyon (UT 210). The route ascends into the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. Enroute to Snowbird and Alta resorts, you will pass many national forest trailheads. An unpaved road continues from Alta to Albion Basin, but access to this segment may be limited due to heavy weekend traffic.

www.visitsaltlake.com, www.snowbird.com, www.alta.com.



10 Kamas - Mirror Lake

This 30-mile drive on UT 150 takes you from Kamas into the Wasatch-Cache National Forest and the High Uinta Mountains. Popular summer camping, winter XC ski & snowmobile areas. Option: continue north on UT 150 to Evanston, WY, then return to Salt Lake City on I-80. [No RV's at higher elevations]. www.mountainland.org/travel



11 Francis - Duchesne - Uinta National Forest



The western terminus of this 75-mile route is Francis, Utah, at the junction of UT 32 and UT 35. UT 35 passes through Hanna and Tabiona before connecting with UT 87 north of Duchesne ("du-shayne") and US 40. This drive traverses paved roads through high alpine country and provides access to the High Uintas Primitive Area. www.mountainland.org/travel, www.dinoland.com

12 Alpine Loop - One of Utah's Most Spectacular

Scenic Drives



Take UT 92 east from the Alpine / Timpanogos Cave National Monument exit #287 off I-15, or exit #275 off I-15 in Orem and take UT 52 east to US 189 to UT 92. UT 92—The Alpine Loop—carves through dramatic mountain terrain as it traverses the Uinta National Forest. Regional sites include Provo Canyon, Bridal Veil Falls, Cascade Springs, Mt. Timpanogos, Tibble Fork Reservoir, Timpanogos Cave and Sundance Village. The route is paved but steep and narrow in places. www.mountainland.org/travel, www.sundanceresort.com



Alpine Loop

13 Vernal - Red Cloud Loop

Views of towering mountains highlight this route accessed 14 miles north of Vernal from US Highway 191. The route travels through aspen groves, open meadows, forests of lodgepole pine and numerous fishing streams. Fremont Indian rock art can be found at McConkie Ranch. Driving this 75-mile circuit takes about 3 hours. The road is paved and unpaved in places, and is closed in winter months. High clearance vehicles recommended. Check on local road conditions in Vernal before touring. www.dinoland.com.



East Green Lake, Frank Jensen

14 Flaming Gorge - Uintas - Wildlife through the Ages National Scenic Byway

Running between Vernal and Manila on US Highway 191 and Utah Highway 44, this byway climbs foothills and major geological formations that go back a billion years and reveal the core of the Uinta Mountains near Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area. Road signs enroute address the area's geology and wildlife. Spectacular views from Red Canyon Overlook. Driving time is two hours. www.dinoland.com



Flaming Gorge, Frank Jensen

15 Sheep Creek - Spirit Lake Scenic Backway

Impressive rock spires line this route along the dramatic Uinta Fault. Beginning 15 miles west of the intersection of US 191 and UT 44, the Sheep Creek Loop is 13 miles long. It returns to UT 44 five miles south of Manila. Option: Spirit Lake Road, a 17-mile spur off Sheep Creek Loop, winds through forests and meadows to Spirit Lake at 10,000 feet elevation. Returning from Spirit Lake requires backtracking to the Sheep Creek Loop. Paved and gravel surfaces on this 48-mile tour. Allow two hours travel time. This backway is closed in winter.

www.dinoland.com

16 North Fork of the Duchesne River

This route provides access to classic mountain vistas along the south slope of the High Uinta Mountains. Six miles north of the junction of US 40 and UT 87 in Duchesne, take the "River Road" (UT 35) along the Duchesne River through picturesque farmland. Proceed northwest on UT 35 to the junction with Forest Route 144. The Forest road travels adjacent to the North Fork of the Duchesne River and comes into a magnificent canyon area featuring steep slopes and jagged limestone outcroppings. The route is 46.1 miles long and requires 1 ½ hours driving time. www.dinoland.com

17 Mt Nebo Scenic Loop



At 11,877 feet, Mt. Nebo is one of Utah's highest peaks. Access to this tour starts on the north side of the loop in Payson or from the south via UT 132 east of Nephi. Although the route is entirely paved, it is unsuitable for large RV's, large motorhomes and large trailers. Route covers large forest recreation area in the Uinta National Forest.

www.mountainland.org/travel/visitor

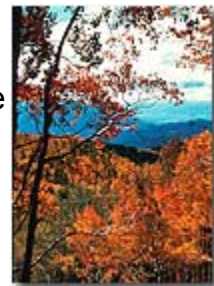


Mt. Nebo Loop, Mel Lewis

18 Skyline Drive



The "backbone" of central Utah, the Skyline Drive winds along the Wasatch Plateau through the Manti-LaSal and Fishlake National Forests. Access at Tucker on US 6, at Fairview (US 89 and UT 31), from other towns along US 89 or UT 10, and from Exit 72 off I-70. Check on road conditions at US Forest Service Offices in Price, Ephraim or Ferron. Some routes paved, others unpaved. www.castlecountry.com



Skyline Drive

19 Price - Castle Valley



Several roads and canyons surrounding Price offer colorful autumn drives including Price Canyon (US 6), Indian Canyon (Scenic Byway US 191 from Helper to



Indian Canyon, Frank Jensen

Duchesne) and Nine Mile Canyon (a major repository of Fremont Indian rock art). To access Nine Mile Canyon, turn onto the canyon road at Walker's Chevron station 2 miles east of Wellington. Watch for the Nine Mile Canyon sign.

UT 10 between Price and I-70 provides access to the Manti-LaSal National Forest and the Skyline Drive (preceding tour). Huntington Canyon (UT 31) is one of Utah's top scenic byways. From its eastern terminus, you'll ascend the route from Huntington, then descend west to Fairview. ***Huntington Canyon is open to passenger cars.***

Once in Fairview, you can head south on US 89 (Utah's Heritage Highway) to tour the small towns of Sanpete County—Mt. Pleasant, Spring City, Ephraim and Manti. This area is expected to become part of a National Mormon Pioneer Heritage Area. www.castlecountry.com. ***US 89 is open to passenger cars.***

20 Tushar Plateau - Elk Meadows



This 40-mile drive on UT 153 connects Beaver and Junction, Utah through the southern end of the high Fishlake National Forest. At its highest elevation, the route takes you past Elk Meadows Resort and Puffer Lake. The road is unpaved for 25 miles From Junction to the summit. www.beavercountyutahtc.com



Kimberly Loop

21 Fish Lake Plateau

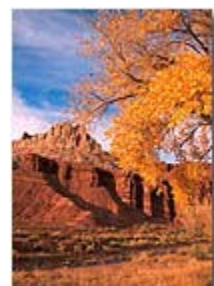
Take UT 25 from its junction with UT 24 between Burrville and Loa northeast to Fish Lake. The east fork of UT 25 meets UT 72 5 miles north of Fremont. Option: continue east from Loa on UT 24 to Capitol Reef National Park (see next tour). Wayne County www.capitolreef.org



Fish Lake Plateau, Ralph Hopkins

22 Aquarius Plateau - Capitol Reef National Park - Boulder Mountain

Access these destinations via UT 24 at Torrey or UT 12 at Escalante. These routes cut through the southern tier of the high Dixie National Forest and require Dixie National Forest Recreational Maps (sold at the Utah Travel Council, the Dixie National Forest office in Cedar City, UT [Supervisor's Office,



Capitol Reef, Frank Jensen

1789 Wedgewood Lane, Cedar City, UT 84720, TEL 435.865.3700] or various multi-agency visitor centers in southern Utah. Although it is major south-central Utah highway, UT 12 between Boulder and Escalante is not for the faint of heart! Called the Hogsback, this segment of UT 12 features steep drop-offs on both sides of the road. See the "All American Road" that follows. www.capitolreef.org and www.brycecanyoncountry.com

UT 12 - All American Road

Highway 12, a showcase of dramatic, naturally-sculpted sandstone, winds its way through some of the most stunning geography in the United States--Bryce Canyon National Park, the Grand-Staircase Escalante National Monument, Capitol Reef National Park and thousands of acres of the Dixie National Forest. Although this route has been chronicled for years by the travel and automobile-enthusiast press, it defies description and must be seen first-hand.

Culture for the Curious

On- and off-the-beaten-track towns—Panguitch, Bryce, Tropic, Cannonville, Henrieville, Escalante, Boulder, Grover and Torrey--offer a glimpse of the simple life in the middle of a seemingly remote wilderness. Historic stops and pullouts provide unrivaled photo opps for the backcountry traveler. Ancient ruins and rock art lurk in canyons and rock faces along the route. Several Utah State Parks offer still more reasons to slow the pace of your cross-country tour: Kodachrome Basin, Escalante, Anasazi Village, to name three. <http://parks.state.ut.us> , www.brycecanyoncountry.com

Irresistible Recreation

This region, known in Utah as Bryce Canyon Country and Capitol Reef Country, is marked by countless opportunities to "get out there" on canyon and forest trails suitable for hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, limited off-highway touring plus muscle- and motor-powered transport in the winter.

US Forest routes in the region may require high-clearance 4WD vehicles and may be impassable in rain or snow. Pick your route carefully, plan ahead. ***Never head into the backcountry without proper preparation.***

23 LaSal Mountain Drive

Take UT 128 east from Moab for 16 miles along the Colorado River. Then turn right (southeast) onto County Road 73 that leads into Castle Valley. As you proceed through Castle Valley, you'll ascend into the Manti-LaSal National Forest. Watch for signs that direct you to turn right onto the LaSal Mountain Loop Road.

You can also access this loop road from its south end off US 191. Seven miles south of the Moab city limit, turn left onto Old Airport Road and proceed to Spanish Valley Drive. Bear right onto Spanish Valley Drive and continue on to the junction with County Road 73. This is the LaSal Mountain Loop Road.



Canyonlands, Frank Jensen

Although this route is paved, it may be temporarily impassable in case of snow. Due to several hairpin turns, parts of this route, particularly on the Castle Valley side, are unsuitable for large RV's, large motorhomes and large trailers. Top regional destinations include Canyonlands National Park, Arches National Park, Dead Horse Point State Park and several Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lookouts. Call 800-635-6622 for route information and "best color" times.

www.discovermoab.com

24 Highway 211 from Junction with US 191 to Canyonlands National Park

Called the Indian Creek Scenic Byway, this route begins at the junction with US 191 fourteen miles north of Monticello. Drive west on the two-lane paved road across a high sage plain before descending into a series of 'switchbacks' to Newspaper Rock--a sheltered alcove featuring rock art by ancestral puebloans. Beyond Newspaper Rock the Byway continues through Indian Creek Canyon where cottonwood trees glow in gold...surrounded by red standstone cliffs. The cottonwoods follow Indian Creek down to Dugout Ranch. Views encompass North and South Sixshooter Peaks. Cliffs rising from the valley floor reach 1,000+ feet to the Canyon Rims Recreation Area and Island in the Sky District of Canyonlands.

The Needles District of Canyonlands National Park lies ahead and, although the desert foliage is sparse, the colors are tawny and subtle. Although this route is one way in/one way out, the view going in the opposite direction is equally spectacular. Call 435-587-3235 for route information and "best color" times.

www.southeastutah.com

25 Harts Draw Road from the Junction with Utah Highway 211



On the return trip from Indian Creek Scenic Byway (previous tour), three miles east of the 'switchbacks' and eight miles from the junction with US 191, you come to the junction of the Harts Draw Road. Turn south and start an easy climb on this paved



Blue Mountains, Mel Lewis

two-lane road into the Manti La Sal National Forest (known locally as the Abajo Mountains or "Blues"). As you climb, the foliage changes from dusky sage and tawny grass to the deep green of pinion and juniper and then to fir and ponderosa. Enroute, gambel oak reveals its bronze-red foliage (if your timing is right!). Aspen populate higher slopes and glow in gold and canary! The road crosses the north flank of the mountains and descends into Monticello.

If you take this route from the Monticello side, drive two blocks south of the traffic light at the junction of US 191 and US 666. Turn west onto 200 South Street and follow the ascent to the lower reaches of the mountain and the Harts Draw Road. Call 435-587-3235 for route information and "best color" times.

www.southeastutah.com

26 Monticello to Blanding via the Abajo Loop Scenic Backway



Including County Road #285 and Forest Road 079) If you want to climb higher in the Abajo Mountains than the paved road allows, the Abajo Loop is for you! Ascending through mountainous terrain to just above 9,000 feet, this route immerses you in gold-leaf aspen and saffron maple scattered among the dark green fir. The road joins the Harts Draw Road five miles from Monticello via 200 South Street just past the USFS Dalton Springs Campground. You immediately plunged into the bright yellow of an aspen grove as you begin to climb the Abajo Loop. You encounter turning aspen and scattered amber and saffron maple throughout the entire route.



Sections of the road border the tree line and offer spectacular views into Colorado and New Mexico before you descend toward Blanding through more aspen and dusky gambel oak. High clearance 4WD essential. Call 435-587-3235 for route information and "best color" times. www.southeastutah.com

27 Utah Highway 46 from US 191 east to the Colorado border.

Resting on the southern slope of the Manti La Sal National Forest / LaSal Mountains, this route begins thirty-two miles north of Monticello and climbs to 7,000 feet in La Sal. The first section of the route crosses the high desert, where ochre rabbit brush is an early harbinger of fall. The tiny town of La Sal is marked by venerable cottonwoods.

Leaving La Sal, the route climbs over La Sal Hill through acres of deep green ponderosa before descending to Old La Sal in a mountain meadow. Continuing beyond Old La Sal the road enters La Sal Creek Canyon, where colors run riot with fall asters, cottonwood, oak, and shrubs decked out in maize, flax and ochre. About twenty miles beyond La Sal the view opens suddenly revealing Colorado's Paradox Valley. High clearance 4WD essential for off-road touring.

Call 1-800-574-4386 for route information and "best color" times.

www.southeastutah.com

28 Utah Highway 95 / Trail of the Ancients Scenic Byway / Utah Bicentennial Highway

Undulating across the rugged canyons of southeastern Utah, this route winds through white and red sandstone along washes crowded with golden cottonwoods. UT 95 joins US 191 four miles south of Blanding and heads west across Cedar Mesa, a vast plateau blanketed by pinion and juniper, highlighted with striking points of brilliant lemon cottonwood. 🚙 Many backroads extend from this main route into higher fall color.

About ten miles west of Blanding where Utah Highway 95 crosses Comb Ridge and descends into Comb Wash, you come to a king's ransom of gold as ancient cottonwoods turn on the charm. Continue about five miles to Mule Canyon and on to the Mule Canyon Ruin--easily accessible just off the road and surrounded by dusky blond rabbit brush. 🚙 The Trail of the Ancients continues to the junction with Utah Highway 261 where it turns south across Cedar Mesa and provides access to still more byways marked by pockets of tawny cottonwood.

Utah 261 descends abruptly through the 'Moki Dugway' as it drops 1,500 feet to the floor of the Valley of the Gods. Fall temperatures make hiking irresistible in this area. Joining US Highway 163 five miles north of Mexican Hat the route heads east to Bluff and a riot of lemon, ochre and saffron colors along the San Juan River. Leaving Bluff, the route heads north to Blanding and points north. Call 1-800-574-4386 for route information and "best color" times.

www.southeastutah.com

29 Cedar Breaks National Monument - Brian Head - Dixie National Forest



Cedar Breaks, often likened to a miniature version of Bryce Canyon, glistens high on the Markagunt Plateau in southwestern Utah. Access is via UT 143 from Parowan or UT 148 south of the park (atop Cedar Canyon, junction with UT 14).

The drive from Parowan up to the mountain resort community of Brian Head is very steep and unsuitable for large RV's, large motorhomes and large trailers. Even a light snowfall renders this segment impassable until the road is plowed or sanded. It's also a steep climb up UT 14. Note: Brian Head is one of Utah's top mountain biking destinations.

A less challenging route that presents some of Utah's most stunning fall colors is UT 143 from Panguitch up to Cedar Breaks. The area around the junction of UT 143 and the Sidney Valley Road in particular hosts massive aspen groves that tend toward red in mid-late September. Regional attractions include Bryce Canyon and Zion National Parks. This tour may be combined with the next two.

www.scenicsouthernutah.com, www.brianheadchamber.com, www.nps.gov/cebr

30 St. George - Zion National Park

You are deep in the heart of "Utah's Dixie" now. Take UT 9 off I-15 and proceed east through the Virgin River Valley to Springdale and Zion National Park. Option: continue east on UT 9 through Zion to US 89, then north to UT 12 and on to Bryce Canyon National Park. Another option: at the junction of UT 9 and US 89, proceed south to Kanab, where the Western Legends RoundUp (annual August event) and Best Friends Animal Sanctuary are top attractions. You'll pass the Coral Pink Sand Dunes State Park enroute to Kanab. www.utahsdixie.com, www.zioncanyon.com, www.kaneutah.com



Zion NP, Mel Lewis

31 Bryce Canyon National Park

The redrock spires, pinnacles and canyons of this Utah landmark form a perfect setting for the golden aspens that line the amphitheaters of Bryce Canyon. Reach Bryce Canyon from UT 12. At the junction of UT 12 and UT 63 turn south toward Ruby's Inn. The national park entrance lies just south of Ruby's Inn.



Bryce Canyon NP
Frank Jensen

No matter what your point of origin, you'll wind up on UT 12, the All American Road described above in the Aquarius Plateau tour. The drive from the junction of US 89 and UT 12 east to the Bryce turnoff at UT 63 takes you through the Dixie National Forest and Red Canyon, a brilliant "teaser" of what's ahead at Bryce. www.brycecanyoncountry.com, www.nps.gov/bryc